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ABSTRACT

This manual is addressed to principals and program managers within the Seattle Public Schools. It presents a planning process model and includes blank forms on which principals are instructed to inform the directors of their school-based plans for improved school effectiveness. The introduction describes Project ACCESS (A Community Cooperating for Effective Seattle Schools), the funding and resource project that produced this guide. The district goals for school-based planning are described as academic achievement, school climate/student discipline, and two-way communication. Step-by-step procedures for developing school plans follow. These include: Step 1, Organize for Planning; Step 2, Perform a Needs Assessment; Step 3, Set the Objectives; Step 4, Develop Alternative Strategies; Step 5, Select the Planning Strategies for the Alternatives; Step 6, Review the Plan with the School Community; Step 7, Prepare for Implementation; Step 8, Review Conditions with Citizens and Staff; Step 9, Make Necessary Modifications to the Plan; Step 10, Check Periodically to See It Objectives Are Being Met; Step 11, Revise Activities as Appropriate; Step 12, Evaluate the Outcomes. An appendix suggests strategies for planning building-based improvements in special education. (KH)

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SCHOOL-BASED PLANNING MANUAL

PART I: A Step-By-Step Planning Guide

Seattle Public Schools

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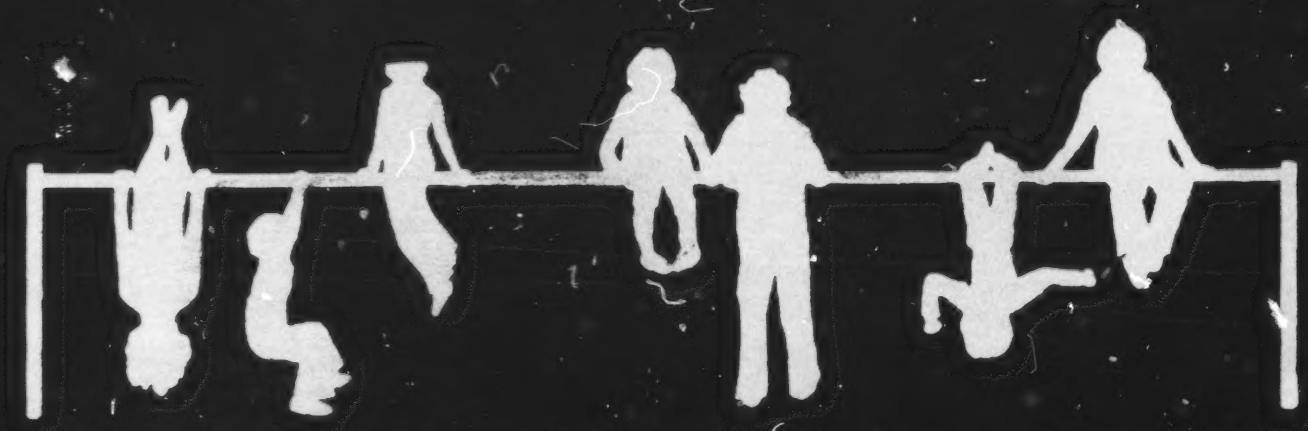

Seattle Public Schools

SCHOOL-BASED PLANNING MANUAL

PART I: A Step-By-Step Planning Guide

In support of Project ACCESS,
a school-based improvement project, funded in part by the Ford Foundation
Ken Seno, Project Coordinator

Manual prepared by
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PLANNING WORKSHEETS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Planning Office staff gratefully acknowledges the participation and contributions of our School District colleagues and citizens in the preparation of this manual. This document is a collection of many people's ideas, and of information prepared by literally dozens of the District's operating units. So many people contributed suggestions, materials or advice that it is not possible to acknowledge each individual's contributions.

Special thanks are due to the staff who prepared the District-wide guidelines for their offices. The efforts of Dave Hoffman, Jim Page, George Sanders, Steve Larson and Kathy Meland in preparing data bases for individual schools and suggestions for their use are also appreciated.

The many fine suggestions from teachers, principals, citizens, and central administration are acknowledged; these suggestions were incorporated wherever feasible.

Special thanks go to Sue Austin of the Citizens' Education Center Northwest for her continuing support, and for the materials prepared by that organization, and to the District's Ken Seno and Jim Grob for their encouragement and advice.

Finally, a very special word of appreciation to Dan Kaylor who provided invaluable design assistance, and to Steve Kline, whose patience and conscientious work have resulted in this evidence of the District's commitment to school improvement.

SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Memorandum

Date: January 18, 1982

To: Principals and Program Managers

From: Robert Andrew, Director, Secondary Education RA
Henry Caldwell, Director, Elementary Education H.C.
Collin Williams, Director, Integration and Special Programs CW.
Dorothy L. Magett, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction DLM

Re: School-Based Planning Manual

The preparatory work for the three-year School-Based Planning Project is now completed and project planning at the individual school can begin. Your Director and Ken Seno, Project Coordinator, will provide you with all the essential information you need to begin your active involvement in this project.

Project ACCESS (A Community Cooperating for Effective Seattle Schools) is a three-year operation. Project involvement for the balance of this school year (1981-82) will focus exclusively on planning for school improvement activities dealing with: 1) academic achievement, 2) school climate/discipline, and 3) two-way communication.

The Planning Manual is designed to provide you with a planning process model. It is not expected that every building will make use of every detail in the manual; however, the model presented is a good one. Especially for those of you who have not had a great deal of experience in broad-scale planning procedures, this manual will provide sound and reliable assistance. All plans must include evidence of appropriate community and staff involvement and must be submitted on the forms provided for that purpose (see pages ix-xix).

All Principals and Program Managers have already completed a smaller scale planning project---the development of their own goals and objectives for 1981-82. This project now asks you to extend that planning to include your entire school community (staff, students and parents).

Curriculum and Instruction Division will be involved in many activities in the coming months dealing with implementation of the recently adopted Discipline Policies. Many of these activities will provide direct assistance to you in developing building climate/discipline elements of your school-based plan.

It is very important that in developing strategies/activities/programs to improve academic achievement each building be sensitive to remaining within approved district curriculum guidelines. In any case, where confusion or questions arise regarding curriculum please discuss it with your Director and/or Program Development office before making a final planning decision.

TIMELINE:

Initial Building Meetings	12/1/81 - 2/22/82
Network Meetings	1/25/82 - 2/19/82
Building Planning Meetings	1/25/82 - 4/30/82
Submit Final Plans to Director	5/03/82

FORM FOR SUBMITTING
SCHOOL-BASED PLANS

Each Seattle public school is to develop a school-based plan during the 1981-82 school year for implementation in 1982-83. A copy of the plan is to be submitted to the appropriate director (e.g., secondary or special programs) on or before May 3, 1982. All schools are to use this six-page form for submitting their plans.

All schools are to complete the following:

1. a needs assessment identifying the problems requiring attention
2. objectives derived from the needs assessment
3. strategies designed to effect the desired changes proposed in the objectives
4. identification of evaluation measures to determine if objectives have been achieved.

This form includes space for you to describe your needs assessment, objectives, strategies and evaluative measures and contains several process questions. Please complete the following process questions as indicated. Use the matrices on pages xv and xix to specify the results of the needs assessment and to describe the improvement plan.

Principals are to sign off on the plan for their buildings below.

School: _____ Principal: _____

FORM FOR SUBMITTING
SCHOOL-BASED PLANS (CONTINUED)

School: _____ Number of teachers in building: _____

Date: _____

Planning Committee

Number of hours planning committee met _____

Indicate the number of representatives from each of the following groups:

_____ Classroom teachers

_____ Parents

_____ Citizens other than parents of current students

_____ Specialists (e.g., special ed staff, bilingual staff and/or librarians). Please specify type of specialist(s): _____

_____ Auxiliary staff (e.g., custodian, secretarial, instructional aide)

_____ Students

_____ Other

_____ Total Number

Community and Staff Involvement (Use back of page if more space is needed)

Describe how staff, parents, students and other citizens were involved in the planning:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Indicate how many teachers were involved in the planning: _____

Indicate methods used to inform your community of the planning:

_____

_____

_____

_____

FORM FOR SUBMITTING
SCHOOL-BASED PLANS (CONTINUED)

School: _____

Date: _____

Networking

How many teachers participated in networking meetings: _____

What characterized the network(s)? (e.g., grade level, pair/triad, etc.):

_____

School Needs Assessment Process

Please describe the process the school used to identify problems. The description of the needs assessment should indicate how conditions requiring attention and their probable causes were identified. Each school will be provided with a needs assessment instrument for completing a self assessment and with data. In addition, they may wish to use a variety of other techniques to gather information. In describing the needs assessment, the school should clearly identify the procedures used. (Use back of page if more space is needed.)

School Needs Assessment Results

The results of the needs assessment should include 1) a description of the existing conditions requiring attention and 2) the causes of these conditions.

In column 1 on the next page, identify existing conditions that require attention. Specify the subject area of the school program.

Example A: Reading--Thirty percent of the students in grade 7 fall below the first quartile in the California Achievement Test, Fall 1981.

In column 2, describe some of the factors explaining the condition.

Example B:
1) There is a high student mobility rate in grade 7.
2) An estimated 15% of the students in grade 7 have limited English ability.
3) The school has emphasized math achievement instead of reading.

FORM FOR SUBMITTING
SCHOOL-BASED PLANS (CONTINUED)

School: _____

Date: _____

SCHOOL-BASED PLAN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Superintendent's Goal Area _____

1 Existing conditions requiring attention (from worksheet 4)	2 Causes of the conditions (from worksheet 4)

FORM FOR SUBMITTING
SCHOOL-BASED PLANS (CONTINUED)

School: _____

Date: _____

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND EVALUATION

Objectives, strategies and evaluation measures should be described on the next page. These should relate to the problems identified on the preceding page.

Additional copies of this form are in the Planning Manual, Part II. Use one sheet for each of the planning goals:

1) Improved academic achievement

2) Improved school climate/discipline

3) Improved two-way communication

In column 1, state the objectives. Group objectives by topics (e.g., reading, language arts, preventive discipline, and/or subject areas for high schools). There should be at least one objective for each goal. Several objectives may be required to describe what you intend to accomplish.

Example: To eliminate food fights in the lunchroom and serious fighting on the playground by February 1983.

In column 2, specify the strategies and activities proposed to bring about the desired conditions as stated in each objective.

Example: Involve the Student Council, staff and parents in developing a set of school rules.

In column 3, describe the evaluation methods that will be used to measure if an objective has been met.

Example: The measure of success will be the principal's and staff's assessments of whether or not fighting has been reduced.

FORM FOR SUBMITTING
SCHOOL-BASED PLANS (CONTINUED)

School: _____

Date: _____

SCHOOL-BASED PLAN OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND EVALUATION MEASURES

Superintendent's Goal Area _____

1 Objectives grouped by topic (from worksheet 5)	2 Strategies (from worksheet 8)	3 Evaluation Measures (from worksheet 6)

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1981, the Seattle School District was awarded funds from the Ford Foundation to plan and implement a school improvement project at all of its schools. This project, Project ACCESS (A Community Cooperating for Effective Seattle Schools), is being coordinated with a principals' in-service training and improvement program at Seattle University, and a school-based planning community involvement project developed by the Citizens Education Center Northwest. The aim of Project ACCESS is to improve academic achievement in the Seattle Public Schools.

Recent research has shown that certain schools are more effective than others in improving academic achievement, although serving students from similar socio-economic backgrounds. These schools are characterized in part by a positive climate, good discipline and an emphasis on academic achievement. The Superintendent is asking each Seattle school to prepare a plan during the 1981-82 school year for improvement in these areas and for improved two-way communication between each school and its community. The plans will be implemented in 1982-83 although some improvements, especially at the high schools, may require several years to fully implement.

Project ACCESS provides resources for staff and community, working together, to develop these school-based improvement plans. The Project is based on four premises:

- All children can be educated.
- The individual school is the most appropriate site for lasting improvement.
- A successful school capitalizes on the special resources and ideas of its staff and citizens.
- With imagination, limited resources can be used more effectively.

School-based plans should result in more positive learning environments and ultimately, higher academic achievement.

This School-Based Planning Manual was designed to assist the people at each school in preparing, carrying out and evaluating their school improvement plans. It should be of use to interested citizens, school staff members, principals and District administrators. Since some of these participants may be planning for the first time, the manual presents some basic planning concepts as an introduction to planning.

The planning manual has two parts. Part I provides each school with suggested step-by-step procedures for developing school plans. It was designed as a school planning workbook with worksheets that allow a planning group to work through its plan at each step of the process. The worksheets are in Part II,

under separate cover. Additional copies of the worksheets are available from the Office of Staff Development, 587-6350.

District-wide guidelines for school-based planning are presented in Part II. The school-based improvement plans will be developed within the context of District-wide policies, procedures and practices. These guidelines should aid building administrators and other school community members in identifying areas of flexibility as well as limits in developing plans.

Part II also contains data specific to each school and some suggestions on how to use these and other data currently available in the schools. Different schools may have widely differing information needs as they develop their plans. Information on additional data available, and the procedures to follow in requesting these data are also described in Part II.

Loose-leaf binders were chosen for both parts of the manual so that school-based planners could add working documents and additional or replacement information (e.g., new data or updated guidelines).

School-Based Planning Goals

The Superintendent defined the goals for school-based planning in his Goals for 1981-82. The planning goals are as follows:

> Academic Achievement: Develop a plan for improved academic achievement and test scores of students; and establish a method for evaluating effectiveness in responding to the needs of individual students.
>
> School Climate/Student Discipline: Achieve a school environment which is conducive to a sense of security, positive self-worth and self-awareness, and which assures an understanding and appreciation of the differences among people. Develop a plan for improved discipline.
>
> Two-Way Communication: Develop a plan for two-way communication of school plans and activities between each school and its important target audiences.

The following definitions have been developed for planning purposes:

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement may be defined as the attainment by the students of a progressive body of knowledge and skills deemed important by the Seattle School District. This body of knowledge and skills is referred to as the District's curriculum which in turn may be defined as the plan that describes the necessary and sufficient means for achieving particular learning ends.

Academic achievement is further, or operationally, defined by its measurement. Such measurement should be based both upon the curriculum's progressive nature and upon the particular curriculum that is taught within the District. In the Seattle Public Schools, this progression is broken into steps called grade levels within which a given scope and sequence or subset of the curriculum is to be taught.

The task of the measurement program is to determine the extent to which each subset of the curriculum is learned and retained by each student. The results from the measurement program will, in turn, define, at any given point in time, the academic achievement of each student, and, collectively, of the student body.

At this time, the District is in the process of developing a measurement program that will fit the District's curriculum. It will not be available for use in the very near future. In the meantime, the elementary, middle and junior high schools and programs will have to utilize the results of the California Achievement Test and the methods of their interpretation and use as described in the section of this document entitled "Suggestions for Using Test Results and Summary Reports for Program Planning." (Part II)

As for the high schools, no District-wide student-by-student achievement data exists. The District is currently setting up a process for reviewing the available tests for a spring testing program. However, until such time as this additional source of achievement information can be made available, you should rely on grades and teacher and department head judgments for your planning and evaluative information.

School Climate

For purposes of developing school-based plans, school climate is defined as those qualities of a school community which influence--

1) student, parents and staff self-concepts, expectations and abilities;

2) the ability of all building personnel to draw on appropriate District-wide support services and resources;

3) the sensitivity of staff to the emotional and developmental needs of all students;

4) the respect and support shared among staff members, parents and students;

5) the steps a school takes to communicate with parents and other community members;

6) the physical appearance and condition of the school building;

7) the level and quality of participation by staff and students in classroom and school decisions;

8) the quality of respect or appreciation demonstrated by students and staff alike regarding learning materials and the building itself;

9) the quality of principal-teacher-student-parent communication regarding appropriate school practices on discipline, school safety, and other issues of building and classroom management related to the pursuit of academic excellence.

Discipline

A definition of discipline which was included in the Discipline Report (Division of Policy Planning, October 1981) should be used for planning purposes:

> Discipline is defined as orderly behavior appropriate to the situation. In the school, discipline is directed at creating and maintaining a climate conducive to learning. An important part of each student's education is learning appropriate behavior, learning the consequences of inappropriate behavior and developing self-control, self-discipline and responsibility for one's actions.

Two-Way Communication

For purposes of developing school-based plans, two-way communication is defined as those attitudes and activities necessary to assure—

1) that students, their families, staff and the affected community are made aware--in timely, reliable fashion--of student progress, the school's instructional program, policies and practices, schedules, calendars, news and special events;

2) that the school has appropriate procedures for being open and responsive to the needs and concerns of the community in which it is located, and whose members it serves, including the active involvement of citizens, staff and students in the development of school-based plans.

STEP-BY-STEP PLANNING PROCEDURES

The planning techniques and the step-by-step procedures in this section of the manual are only suggestions on how to plan. If a school already has procedures that work well, the planning committee may wish to use its own process. If planning is new to a school, it may decide to follow the procedures closely. Since a variety of planning and evaluative techniques are suggested, a school will need to be selective in deciding which planning techniques will work best for it. No one planning technique always works or works for everyone.

The instructions for developing school-based plans and the standard form for each school to use in submitting its plan are in the memorandum to principals and program managers (page vii). The outcomes of the planning steps that are to be submitted as part of each school's plan are noted in the narrative that follows.

Examples are provided throughout the Planning Guide. The examples show how a hypothetical middle school plans to improve reading skills of its students as one of its objectives. The same approach applies to most problems that a school planning group decides to address.

The steps in the process are:

STEP 1 – ORGANIZE FOR PLANNING

Who should serve on the school planning committee? How should staff and citizens be involved in the process?

STEP 2 – PERFORM A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

How well are students performing? What are staff, student and citizen perceptions of student performance, school program, school climate, discipline and two-way communication? What is desired in each of the planning areas? What is the difference between existing conditions and what is desired? Why does this difference exist?

STEP 3 – SET THE OBJECTIVES

What should be accomplished in the future? How will a school know when an objective has been achieved?

STEP 4 – DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

How can the problems be solved and needs met?

STEP 5 – SELECT THE PLANNING STRATEGIES FROM THE ALTERNATIVES

Which alternatives are most feasible?

STEP 6 – REVIEW THE PLAN WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Does the school community feel that the plan adequately identifies the problems? What is the community's opinion on the proposed solutions to the problems?

STEP 7 – PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

What has to happen to implement the plan? How will the activities be completed on schedule? Who has responsibility for implementation?

STEP 8 – REVIEW CONDITIONS WITH CITIZENS AND STAFF: 1982-83

What changes have occurred since the plan was developed?

STEP 9 – MAKE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS TO THE PLAN: 1982-83

Which objectives or strategies should be changed so the plan fits changing conditions and needs?

STEP 10 – CHECK PERIODICALLY TO SEE IF OBJECTIVES ARE BEING MET: 1982-83

Is the plan working?

STEP 11 – REVISE ACTIVITIES AS APPROPRIATE: 1982-83

What changes should be made as the plan is implemented?

STEP 12 – EVALUATE THE OUTCOMES: 1982-83

Were the objectives met? How effective was the planning process? How effective were the strategies and activities?

STEP 1 – ORGANIZE FOR PLANNING

STEP 1A - SET UP THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The first step in developing a school improvement plan is to form a planning committee. The only requirement for planning committees is that they have both citizen and staff members. Some suggestions for organizing and working as a committee follow:

- Planning committees seem to work best with between 6 and 15 members depending on the size of the school. Should greater numbers of school community members wish to participate, a steering committee and interest-area sub-committees may be appropriate.

- There is a greater chance of having the group's recommendation accepted by the local school community if the committee is representative of that school community. Citizens without children in school (local business people, senior citizens, community representatives) may be interested in serving on the committee. Ethnic representation and interest groups in the school population should be considered in recruiting committee members. The following list can be used as a reminder of the types of groups to be considered for membership selection:

  Classroom teachers from all grade levels

  Administration

  Parents

  Citizens without children in school

  Students

  Compensatory programs

  Special Education

  Other special or optional programs

  Auxiliary staff

- The Planning Committee should have a well defined charge of its responsibilities. A sample charge is:

  To perform a school needs assessment which will be used for improvement planning; to develop a school improvement plan including objectives, strategies to meet needs, and an

evaluation design; to write the school plan; and to review the plan with the community.

- Based upon experiences in other districts, committees should expect to spend approximately 15 to 20 hours in planning sessions. These sessions could be weekly meetings of one to two hours in duration, two to three all day workshops, or a combination of workshops and weekly meetings.

Citizen Involvement

Below are suggestions on working with citizens, prepared by the Citizens Education Center Northwest, a non-profit, independent organization encouraging citizen leadership in improving public education:

- Plan meetings at times when working citizens can participate. Scheduling meetings for non-working hours is the primary way to encourage representative participation.
- Consider holding meetings at alternative sites, especially when communicating results of planning.
- Provide channels for citizens and staff not directly involved to express views and discuss draft plans (testimony, open meetings, etc.).
- Avoid concentrating on "why we can't do this" until all the good ideas have emerged.
- The purpose of the planning (why a school is planning) should be clearly understood and agreed upon before a committee begins its work.
- Inform staff and citizens of the number of meetings to be held and when they will occur. Citizens will want to know this before they agree to participate.
- Citizen roles should be clearly defined and communicated when soliciting citizen involvement. Are citizens to be helpers, advisors or policy makers?
- Use newsletters with brief survey forms requesting school-wide input.
- Consider using the school-wide community in setting priorities. One technique is to ask participants a hypothetical question: "If we had $10,000 to spend on school supplies, how would you allocate this money?"[1]

[1]See pages 55 and 77 in Part II for information regarding allowable expenditures.

STEP 1B - DECIDE HOW OTHERS SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING

Parent and staff support of the planning is important to school improvement. This is encouraged by involving representatives of the school community and by keeping parents, staff and the community informed as plans are developed.

Worksheet 1, Part II, can be used by school communities in determining who should be involved and to what extent in each step of the planning process.

STEP 2 – PERFORM A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The model proposed here for the needs assessment is a discrepancy analysis. This includes identification of existing conditions, of desired future conditions and an analysis of the discrepancy between the two. The identification of existing and desired future conditions focuses the committee on how student performance, behavior, school climate and two-way communication compares with what the school community wants it to be. The analysis of the discrepancies encourages the committee to consider the major factors affecting school effectiveness.

There are three major activities in the process:

1. Develop a general problem statement related to the goals of improved academic achievement, school climate/discipline and two-way communication.

2. Collect and review data on concerns identified in the general problem statement.

3. Analyze the data to define the existing conditions requiring attention. Identify the desired conditions and list causes for the differences between existing and desired conditions.

A planning committee may wish to design its own needs assessment or use the procedures described on the next few pages. In planning for some of the goals, a committee may decide to use a shortened process. It may not always be necessary to collect and analyze data to define a problem. In some instances, it may be sufficient to intuitively identify the conditions requiring attention. For example, in planning for improved communication, a committee may identify an issue as the community's poor perception of the school and then move on to developing objectives, which is the next step in the process. (Step 3)

The needs assessment is designed so a committee progresses from the general to the specific. For each goal area, the first activity results in a general description of a school's problems based on the school-based planners' initial

understanding of these problems. Successive activities allow a committee to refine these general observations into clearly defined statements with greater specificity.

Refer to the appendix (Planning for Special Education Students) for some suggestions on considering the unique needs of special education students and improving the performance of all students.

STEP 2A - DEVELOP A GENERAL PROBLEM STATEMENT

A discussion of school issues is suggested as the initial activity for identifying educational concerns and for focusing the planning on a reasonable number of issues to address. It is important to select a limited number of issues since it may not be feasible to develop and implement solutions to all of the concerns raised by a planning committee. Once the committee has a general idea of its direction, it is helpful for a member of the committee to summarize the concerns in a clear, concise statement. A suggested technique for writing this statement is to imagine that you are explaining the problems to someone who knows little or nothing about your school. Worksheet 2, Part II, can be used for drafting your problem statement.

An excerpt from the problem statement developed by a hypothetical middle school is as follows:

> Too many students in this school are reading poorly.

STEP 2B - COLLECT AND REVIEW THE DATA

After developing the general problem statement, the planning committee may further define the existing situation by reviewing data already available either in the school office files or in Part II of the manual. It may decide to collect some additional data as well.

Below is a list suggesting familiar types of data that may be useful.

- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Standardized test results
- Other tests a school may wish to use
- Student records
- Documents (minutes of meetings, newspaper stories, office records)
- Data from Student Information Systems Office
- Discussions at meetings

The Needs Assessment Instrument, Worksheet 3, Part II, can be used to obtain opinions from staff and citizens regarding the effectiveness of the

school program, school climate, discipline and communication with the public. A planning committee may choose to have several groups (e.g., students, teachers, PTSA Board and/or Instructional Council) complete the questionnaire. It should be administered, tabulated and analyzed at each school.

Additional data are available upon request from the Testing and Technical Services Office, Student Information Systems Office, and Personnel Data Services Office. If a school decides to collect other information, a few cautions may be in order. It is important to plan carefully any additional data collection activities. Don't collect information just to have a lot of information available. Don't spend so much time collecting information that the planning committee does not have the time to analyze and use it. It often takes as much time to use information effectively as to collect it.

The following sections contain suggestions on using data in assessing needs for each goal:

Improving Academic Achievement

- Consider asking one or two people to analyze the test data and report back to the total group. See Part II (page 95) for an in-depth discussion on identifying subject matter areas that need strengthening based on achievement test results.
- A planning committee will want to look at more than just test results. Student attitudes, parent attitudes, teacher judgments, staff skills, materials used and facilities are also important.
- Consider the performance of sub-groups of students. Low-achieving students, option or special program students, handicapped students and other sub-groups are likely to have different or special needs.
- Consider evaluation information that is already available about a school program.

Improving Discipline/Climate

Planning to meet the goal of improved discipline should occur within the context of the recommendations of the Discipline Seminar conducted by the Office of Policy Planning in the fall of 1981. The Directors in the Curriculum and Instruction Division will be assisting principals in implementing these recommendations.

Suggestions for data collection are:

- Contact Integration Services if you wish to have a school climate survey conducted.

- Data on disciplinary actions (i.e., suspensions, corporal punishments and expulsions) for 1979-80 and 1980-81 are available upon request from the Student Information Systems Office.

- Review school rules already in place and the methods used to enforce them. How effective are the rules and the enforcement methods?

- Collect data on incidents of misbehavior (as contrasted with disciplinary actions reported).

- Survey students, parents and staff on school discipline. The Needs Assessment Instrument contains questions on discipline. If a planning committee decides to study discipline in depth, more detailed survey instruments are available from the Staff Development Office, 587-6350.

Improving Communication

The data section in Part II includes a list of community newspapers and their deadlines. Contact with other schools should reveal a number of successful strategies for improving the exchange of information between schools and their communities. Committees may also contact the Citizens Education Center Northwest (624-9955) for information on improving communication with citizens.

STEP 2C - ANALYZE THE DATA

After identifying the general problems and collecting data on these topics, the analysis stage defines the existing conditions ("what is") in the areas of concern, specifies the desired future state ("what should be"), and identifies the causes of the existing conditions requiring attention.

In analyzing the difference between "what is" and "what should be" it may be helpful to list the documentation for these two elements of the needs assessment. For example, a hypothetical middle school might develop the following analysis:

What is:

- Thirty-five percent of the students in grade 7 in this school score in the lowest quartile in reading on the CAT test. Twenty-eight percent of the 8th grade students score in this quartile in reading. (If the students were the same as the national sample, 25% of them would score in the lowest quartile.)

- The median reading scores for 7th grade students in this school are at the 40th percentile, and for 8th grade students at the 43rd percentile.

What should be:

- Students at this school should read at a level that results in the achievement score distribution that are consistent with or above the national sample.

In the example above, note that the desired condition does not prescribe a remedy for the situation. Frequently, planning groups assume that needs will be met by a new program or method before fully understanding the basic underlying causes of the existing situation. Jumping to a solution before analyzing a problem may restrict the possibility of developing appropriate, innovative, and successful solutions. Before designing solutions (developing strategies) the planning committee should identify causes. Although many factors, such as family mobility or instability, can not be affected by the planning, they need to be considered so that workable solutions to problems may be developed. The causes identified at the hypothetical school might be as follows:

1. The individualized reading program used at this school may not be the most effective approach for low achieving students.

2. Fifteen percent of the students in grade 7 and 18% of students in grade 8 have limited English language ability.

3. Students enrolling at this school are deficient in reading comprehension skills.

4. The District curriculum has not been closely followed in several language arts classes.

Worksheet 4, Part II, is for use in completing the needs assessment. The description of the existing conditions requiring attention and the causes of these conditions are to be submitted as part of the school plan on the form on page ix of the memorandum to principals and program managers.

STEP 3 – SET THE OBJECTIVES

STEP 3A - DEVELOP THE OBJECTIVES

In step 2, the desired future condition was defined. The description of this condition contains some of the elements of an objective. In this step, the statement of the desired future is developed into a complete objective. An objective is defined as a specific measurable statement of what should be accomplished by a given date. In this planning design, an objective describes an outcome rather than a process or an activity.

Each objective should contain the following four elements:

1. What - the nature of the objective (e.g., improve reading skills or improve staff morale)

2. When - the point in the future when something is to be accomplished

3. Who - the individual or groups the objective affects (e.g., students or teachers)

4. How Much - the amount that is to be accomplished (e.g., five percentile point increase, 10% reduction of absentee rate or significant improvement)

In some instances, it may be necessary to include a fifth element which is a qualifying condition. This would explain circumstances which must be overcome to meet the objective (e.g., given that adequate textbooks are provided).

Some additional suggestions for developing objectives from the California State Department of Education, Planning Handbook,[2] are:

- Set some objectives for the special needs of certain students (e.g., special education, Title I and the gifted). All types of students are expected to show gains in achievement.
- Set your objectives high enough to lead to program improvement.
- Begin by developing objectives that are related to key improvement areas. Once this is complete, a school may wish to plan in other areas (e.g., enrichment programs, after-school sports or daycare programs).
- Don't get bogged down in technicalities. Focus on setting objectives that provide direction.

The analysis developed by the hypothetical middle school might be translated into the following objective:

> By the spring of 1983, the school will have improved the reading skills of its students as reflected by a 5 percentile point increase in median reading scores of current 7th grade students and by a 10 perentage point reduction in the number of these students in the lowest quartile.[3]

[2]California, Department of Education, Planning Handbook (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1978), p. 18

[3]There is no District standard for determining if a gain in test scores is adequate. A school should select whatever gain it feels is desirable and realistic for its students.

Worksheet 5, Part II, can be used for listing objectives.

STEP 3B - DECIDE HOW TO EVALUATE IF OBJECTIVES ARE BEING MET

As defined, objectives are measurable. For each objective, school-based planners should identify the measure a school will use to determine if that objective has been met.

A group can use any of several methods to evaluate success in reaching objectives. All objectives, including those to improve academic achievement, do not have to be evaluated by test or by "hard" data. For example, teachers' perceptions of students' achievements and student records can be used as measures of success. Nor do all objectives have to be measured in qualitative terms. If an objective is to inform the community about the successes of a school, positive coverage of a school's activities in the community paper might be a measure of effectiveness. Worksheet 6, Part II, can be used for developing the evaluative measures. The objectives and evaluative measures are to be submitted as part of the school plan on the form on page ix of the memorandum to principals and program managers.

The hypothetical middle school might use the following evaluative measure:

> The staff will compare this year's fall CAT reading test scores for 7th graders with their scores as 8th grade students in the spring of 1983. If the median reading score represents a 5 percentile point increase and if 25 percent or fewer students are in the lowest quartile, then the objective will have been met.

STEP 4 – DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

In this step, the planning group will be discussing how to solve the problems identified in the needs assessment. It will be deciding what specific changes should be made in the school program, in discipline procedures and other areas, in order to meet objectives.

A strategy is:

> An activity, series of activities and/or school practices designed to reach a desired objective.

Strategies are broad improvement approaches that usually apply school-wide. Certain areas, such as individual teaching styles, are better left to individual choice.

Seattle classroom teachers have emphasized that development of a building plan

alone cannot be expected to change the character of a school. Fundamental to success is that each staff member develops an individual plan for increased effectiveness in dealing with students. The planning committee may ask staff members to develop strategies for improving student performance and/or building climate and positive discipline.

A planning committee will want to generate as many ideas as possible assuming that the more ideas proposed the better the chance of selecting the best ones. In suggesting strategies, don't let tradition or regulations limit the group's creativity. When selecting strategies from the alternatives, it will be necessary to consider realities. However, in developing alternatives it is helpful to brainstorm without these constraints.

In developing alternative strategies[4]--

- think about various aspects of the program: methodologies, materials, personnel, adult skills and talents;
- remember to propose strategies to meet the needs of special groups of students;
- recognize the parts of the school program that are working well and that do not need to be changed as well as areas needing improvement.

Examples of strategies developed by our hypothetical middle school might be:

1. A community volunteer program will be established to provide tutoring for low achieving students.
2. Teachers will spend more time on the task of teaching reading.
3. All language arts teachers will develop strategies to improve the reading performance of their students.
4. An inservice program on middle school reading improvement will be conducted for all academic subject instructional personnel.

Worksheet 7 for listing alternative strategies is in Part II.

[4]California, Department of Education, Planning Handbook, p. 19.

STEP 5 – SELECT THE PLANNING STRATEGIES FROM THE ALTERNATIVES

STEP 5A – ANALYZE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES[5]

Once alternative strategies have been listed, it is important to analyze them carefully. Questions to ask are:

- How feasible are the strategies?
- How effective and how adequate will they be?
- How appropriate are the strategies?

A suggested technique is to analyze each alternative on the basis of several general criteria. Consider how an alternative meets the following:

- Resource feasibility: Are the resources (e.g., funding, staff and materials) available or can they be obtained?
- Cost efficiency: How costly is the strategy compared to the benefit received?
- Effectiveness: How successful will this strategy be in meeting the objective? Are there other strategies that will be more effective? Will this strategy accomplish enough to make it worthwhile to carry out?
- Appropriateness: Is it "right" and "proper" to use this kind of strategy? For example, if implementing a strategy might damage the staff's reputation or hurt students, it should not be selected.
- Compatibility with District guidelines: Is this strategy feasible in light of District policies and practices? (See the District Guidelines in Part II (pages 1-85).
- Side effects: What are some of the benefits not already considered that could result from putting this strategy into effect? What are the negative effects that might occur as a result of this strategy?

Worksheet 8, Part II, can be used as a first cut to eliminate some

[5]The materials and worksheets in this section are adapted from the Hip Pocket Guide to Planning and Evaluation, by Dorothy P. Craig (San Diego: University Associates, Learning Concepts, 1978), pp. 48-53.

alternatives. Once the less desirable alternatives are dropped, a planning committee may wish to do an in-depth analysis using the same criteria on the remaining strategies.

STEP 5B - REVIEW THE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Before making a decision on the strategies, the planning committee may decide to have the alternative strategies reviewed by the school staff and by parent groups.

Consider one or more of the following:

- Review by the PTSA or PTO
- Instructional Council members consult with their departments/grade levels
- Questionnaire sent home with students for parents to provide opinion on strategies (This could be included in a school newsletter sent to parents.)
- Students discuss alternative strategies as appropriate in class or at student government meetings.

STEP 5C - SELECT THE STRATEGIES

The final activity of this step is to choose the best strategies for implementation. Worksheet 8 on evaluating alternative strategies includes a column to check when a strategy is selected. Strategies should be listed on the form for submitting a plan on page ix of the memorandum to principals and program managers.

STEP 6 – REVIEW THE PLAN WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The school community should have the chance to review and comment on the proposed plan before it is final. Provide enough time for this public review and for revision of the plan after the review period. Refer to the techniques for reviewing alternative strategies for some suggestions on how to conduct the public review.

The final plan is to be submitted to the appropriate Curriculum and Instruction Director as specified in the memorandum to principals and program managers.

STEP 7 – PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Once the improvement plan has been completed, the principal or his or her designee should prepare to put the plan into effect. This means identifying what has to be done, when, and who has the responsibility for each activity or event. Preparing for implementation can be divided into three activities: Step 7A is for identifying the major activities and the order in which they occur. Step 7B is for scheduling the activities; step 7C is for assigning the responsibility for each major activity.

STEP 7A – IDENTIFY THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND THE ORDER IN WHICH THESE ACTIVITIES OCCUR[6]

For each strategy, list the activities which need to be completed to implement the strategy. Worksheet 9, Part II, can be used for this purpose.

One way of placing activities in sequence is to start at the target activity and to think backwards from that event. Ask what is the last activity or event to happen before this strategy can be implemented. Then ask what is the activity that has to occur before that point is reached. Continue to ask this question until the sequence of all the activities is established.

STEP 7B – DEVELOP A SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETING THE ACTIVITIES

This step requires thinking about how long each major activity will take in order to complete the entire process by a designated time. The plans are to be implemented during the 1982-83 school year and evaluated by the school community during the second semester of that year. These deadlines should be considered in designating a completion date for the implementation schedule. Activities will need to be underway for a sufficient length of time before they can be evaluated.

The final step in scheduling is to place the activities in calendar form. A timeline showing the beginning and completion dates for each activity in a graphic form is a simple scheduling technique. Worksheet 10, Part II, can be used for this purpose. Activities are listed in the column on the left. A bar line is used to connect the beginning and completion points for each activity. Several activities are displayed on each sheet to show the relationships among them.

[6]The discussion and worksheets for this section are adapted from materials in the Hip Pocket Guide, by Dorothy P. Craig, pp. 60-70.

The timing for introducing strategies can be important. For example, teachers may find that the first few weeks of the school year is the best time for initiating new classroom strategies.

STEP 7C - ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES

The final step in preparing for implementation is to assign responsibility for each major activity. Worksheet 11, Part II, can be used to identify the person(s) responsible for seeing that an activity occurs along with all others who take part or will be affected. The principal's involvement refers to the specific responsibility of the principal in an event. To what extent is or should a principal be involved? How does the principal coordinate?

Now, a school has completed its improvement plan and the planning activity for 1981-82. There may be some strategies that the school may wish to implement before the end of the current school year. However, most of the plan will be implemented during 1982-83. Steps 8-12 explain how to update the plan next fall and how to evaluate it before beginning a new planning cycle in 1982-83.

STEP 8 – REVIEW CONDITIONS WITH CITIZENS AND STAFF: 1982-83

Early in the fall, the school should reassess conditions to see if the plan needs modification. Staff and citizens should discuss how the school has changed since the initial plan was prepared. They might review the results of the needs assessment to see if the conclusions describe current conditions. Use the current and past year's October enrollment count and racial distribution data to determine how the school population has changed. Consider staff changes, changing conditions in the community and the School District, and staff and citizens' perceptions of these and other changes.

STEP 9 – MAKE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS TO THE PLAN: 1982-83

After discussing the current conditions at the school and reviewing the fall 1982-83 data, the next step is to modify the plan to fit the changing conditions and needs. Here are some basic questions for a school to ask in revising its plan:[7]

[7]These questions were adapted from a discussion on evaluation in the Hip Pocket Guide, by Dorothy P. Craig, p. 86.

1. Are the resources still available to put the plan into effect? If not, can additional resources be obtained? (Staff may wish to review the procedures for obtaining grants on page 73 of Part II.)

2. Should a strategy be revised or another strategy developed? (The list of alternative strategies developed last year may provide some ideas.)

3. Should sections of the plan be dropped completely?

4. Should the implementation activities be revised?

STEP 10 – CHECK PERIODICALLY TO SEE IF OBJECTIVES ARE BEING MET: 1982-83

As a plan is being implemented, it is important to ask periodically if it is working. Some strategies may not work. Conditions at schools change during the year and may require modifications to plans. These conditions may require a school to rethink some of its objectives or revise certain planning strategies. Some suggestions on assessing how well a school is doing on a continuing basis are:

- Set aside time at teachers or Instructional Council meetings monthly to discuss how well the school is doing in solving its problems.
- Use a committee to continually monitor the effectiveness of the program (e.g., activities and strategies) in enhancing the educational program or reducing problems.

STEP 11 – REVISE ACTIVITIES AS APPROPRIATE: 1982-83

As a plan is being implemented, a school community will learn more about its problems. The periodic checks suggested in Step 10 may show that the plan should be modified. If this is the case, the suggestions on revising a plan in step 9 may be helpful.

STEP 12 – EVALUATE THE OUTCOMES: 1982-83

Planning is incomplete unless there is some way of knowing whether or not the plan worked. Before starting another planning cycle, a school community will

need to know the outcomes of the school-based plans prepared in 1981-82. It should review the changes and judge how successful the program was in improving student achievement and school climate and whether or not communication with parents and the community improved. Parents, students, teachers and other interested individuals should be involved in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the efforts.

When the planning committee developed objectives, a criterion for measuring success was identified for each objective. Use these criteria in measuring the success of the objectives. In addition to looking at the effectiveness of individual objectives and strategies, consider--

- how well they all related;
- how the needs assessment worked;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the process used;
- whether the public review of the plan was successful.

Below are some questions a school community might wish to use in designing the yearly evaluation:

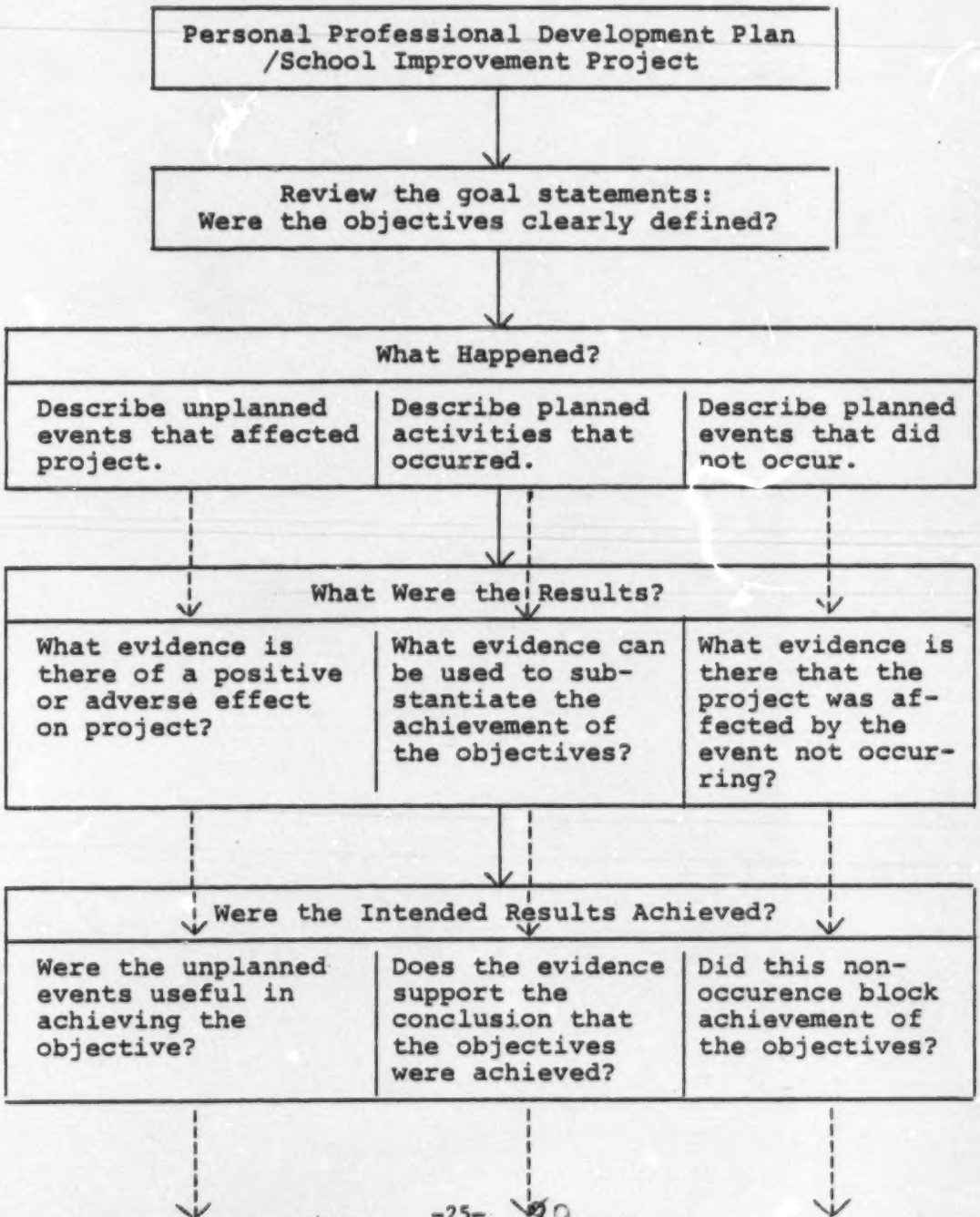
- Could the discretionary funds in the budget have been allocated more wisely?
- Did the program improve student achievement?
- Did all types of students show some improvement?
- How did the students feel about the program?
- How did the parents feel about the program?
- Was school climate improved because of the planning?
- Is discipline better because of the new procedures, rules or programs?
- What unintended successes occurred during the year and why?
- Were the efforts to improve two-way communication successful?
- Were students in special programs integrated into all regular school programs and activities to the maximum extent possible?

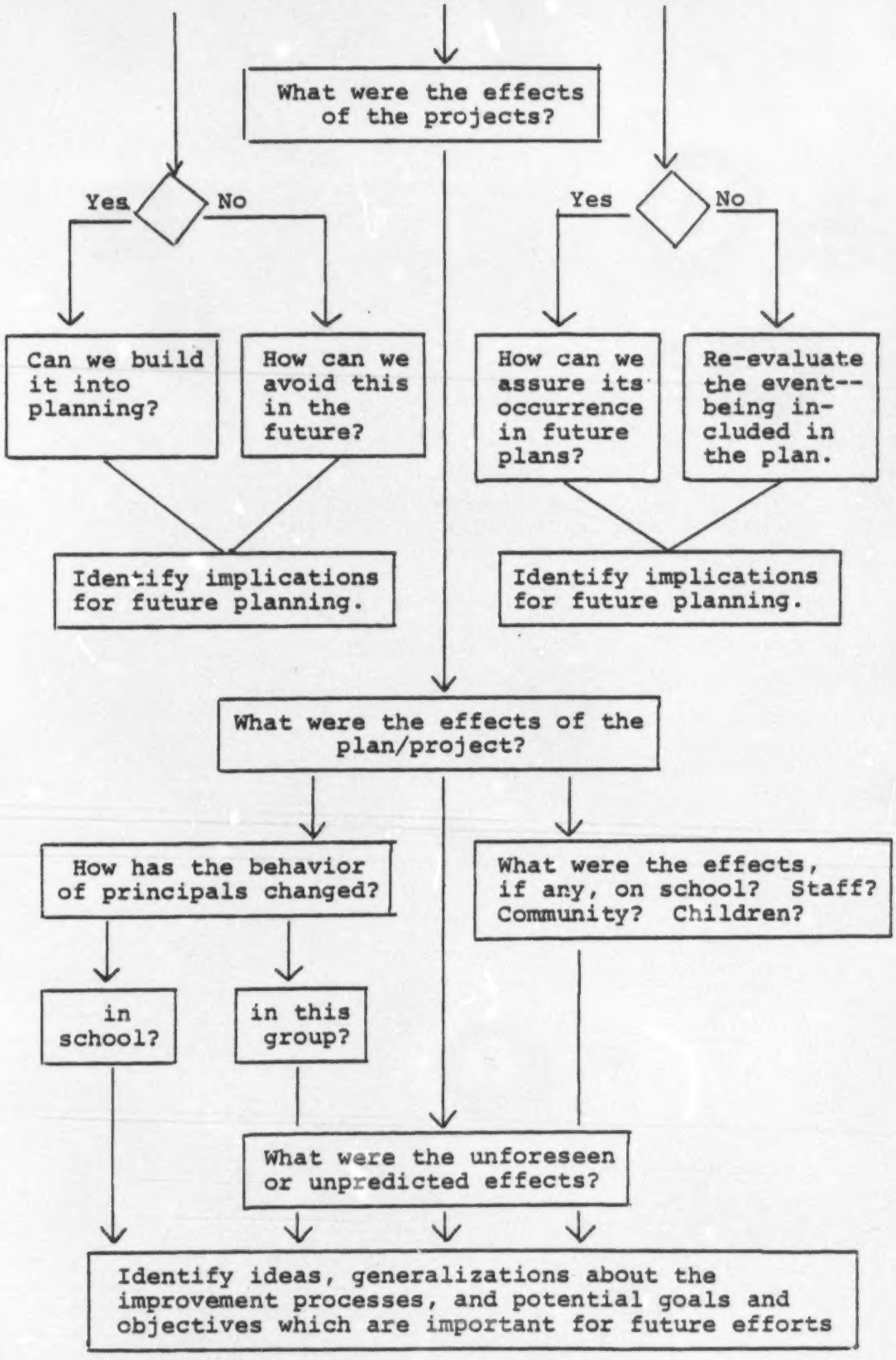
A section from the principals inservice manual entitled, "Evaluation Questions" presents another approach to evaluating a plan.[8] It appears on pages 25 and 26.

[8]James C. LaPlant, Comp., Principals Inservice Program: Developmental Materials (Dayton, Ohio: Charles F. Kettering Foundation, | I | D | E | A | , 1980), pp. 8-5 and 8-7.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

You have been involved in a personal professional development plan and a school improvement project. The following sequence of questions incorporates a formative evaluation rationale and is intended to guide the evaluation of both efforts and to clarify the principal's role in evaluation.


Personal Professional Development Plan /School Improvement Project
Review the goal statements: Were the objectives clearly defined?
What Happened?
Describe unplanned events that affected project.
Describe planned activities that occurred.
Describe planned events that did not occur.
What Were the Results?
What evidence is there of a positive or adverse effect on project?
What evidence can be used to substantiate the achievement of the objectives?
What evidence is there that the project was affected by the event not occurring?
Were the Intended Results Achieved?
Were the unplanned events useful in achieving the objective?
Does the evidence support the conclusion that the objectives were achieved?
Did this non-occurence block achievement of the objectives?


What were the effects of the projects?
Yes
No
Yes
No
Can we build it into planning?
How can we avoid this in the future?
How can we assure its occurrence in future plans?
Re-evaluate the event--being included in the plan.
Identify implications for future planning.
Identify implications for future planning.
What were the effects of the plan/project?
How has the behavior of principals changed?
What were the effects, if any, on school? Staff? Community? Children?
in school?
in this group?
What were the unforeseen or unpredicted effects?
Identify ideas, generalizations about the improvement processes, and potential goals and objectives which are important for future efforts

APPENDIX

SUGGESTED PLANNING INSTRUCTIONS
BUILDING-BASED IMPROVEMENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION
Prepared by Special Education Department

It is recommended that a member of the special education staff be included on the planning committee for each building.

In working with the planning committee on the needs assessment, the following guidelines for the three areas of focus should be kept in mind.

I. Academic Achievement

1. Teachers who allocate more time to an academic activity get better achievement from their students.

2. Teachers who produce higher engagement rates get better achievement from their students.

3. Teachers who provide high success activities get better achievement from their students.

4. Teachers who provide reading and math tasks that produce low success and high frustration rates produce students with lower achievement rates.

5. Teachers who provide more substantive interaction between students and themselves produce higher engaged time (learning time). Teachers who provide more engaged time get higher achievement from their students. Engaged time consists of:

   a) Academic questioning

   b) Academic feedback

   c) Planned explanations as opposed to providing explanations only when students need them

   d) Academic observation (the monitoring function in the classroom)

6. Teachers who provide structure to their lessons in the form of goals and objectives and inform their students of the goals and objectives get better achievement from their students.[1]

[1] Vaughan, Joseph. Time to Learn. National Institute of Education, 1200 19th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20208.

7. Teachers of the learning disabled who provide more time on high success tasks get better achievement from their students.[2]

8. Teachers who reduce transition time between learning tasks get better achievement from their students.

9. Teachers who provide systematic, direct instruction get better achievement from their students.[3]

10. Teachers who hold high expectations of learning for their students get better achievement from their students.[4]

11. Teachers who provide a role model of enthusiasm for learning get better achievement from their students.[5]

12. Teachers who use or adapt the District-adopted curriculum get better achievement from their students.

13. Teachers who provide instruction for selected handicapped students in the regular classroom get better achievement for their handicapped students.[6]

[2] Chow, Stan. A study of academic learning of mainstreaming learning disabled students. Final report to Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. Grant No. 007902007, 1981.

[3] Haring, Norris, Lovitt, Thomas C., Eaton, Marie D. and Hansen, Cheryl L. The Fourth R: Research in the Classroom. Columbus, Ohio, Charles E. Merrill, Publishing Company, 1978.

[4] Edmonds, Ron. A discussion of the Literature and Issues Related to Effective Schooling. Paper prepared for the National Conference on Urban Education, St. Louis, Missouri, July 10-14, 1978.

[5] Enthusiasm. Practical Applications of Research. Bloomington, Indiana: Newsletter of Phi Delta Kappa's Volume 3, No. 4, June 1981.

[6] Special Education Report of Diagnostic-Prescriptive Teacher Service in Seattle Public Schools. Open Doors, Number 8, October, 1981.

II. School Climate/Discipline

Handicapped students feel better about themselves when they are accepted as a regular part of the building's program. To accomplish this, the following is suggested.

1. Special education students need to identify with the regular education program. They need to have a regular "home room" just like the non-handicapped students.

2. Efforts should be made to diminish labeling special populations. This helps reduce the stigmatic effects of the handicapping condition.

3. Facilities/classrooms for special populations should be integrated in the school building. A separate wing or separate physical facility is not acceptable.

Students who have trouble distinguishing when and how to express anger and frustration need to have peer role models of acceptable behavior. Isolating all discipline problem students into one class cannot provide this appropriate modeling.

Students need direct instruction on how to express feelings and emotions in acceptable ways.

III. Communication

Teachers who keep parents informed about the goals and objectives for their classroom can expect better cooperation and support from the home.

Teachers who keep active in their professional organizations are more likely to be better informed and more current on instructional issues than teachers who do not participate.